



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/001,958	12/05/2001	Yusuke Kobayashi	Q67392	1400

7590 11/17/2006

SUGHRUE, MION, ZINN, MACPEAK & SEAS, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

EXAMINER

HSU, RYAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3714

DATE MAILED: 11/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/001,958

Applicant(s)

KOBAYASHI, YUSUKE

Examiner

Ryan Hsu

Art Unit

3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 August 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/9/06.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

In response to the amendments filed on 8/10/06, claims 1, 11, 20, and 33 amended.

Claims 1-44 are pending in the current application. With respect to the specification submitted on 8/10/06, it has been accepted. With respect to the new drawings of Fig 10A and 13A, these drawings will be accepted once the page numbers for these drawings is specified by the applicant's representative.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1, 11, 20, and 33 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 11 of U.S. Patent No. 6,840,837 B2.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both sets of claims are directed towards a racing game machine, comprising:

a racing track; a traveling field, on which platen dots are provided, extending below the racing track. The current application and US Patent No. 6,840,837 B2 are also contained the limitations directed towards a plurality of self-propelled members comprising of a first and second yoke in order to allow for movement along the platen dots. Although the two sets of independent claims are simply variances from each other such as a “magnet” or a “motor” (*which consists of magnets to generate energy*) and other minor differences that are considered to be art known equivalents.

The limitations disclosed above in US Patent 6,840,837 B2 and the current application are not patentably distinct as they both describe the same racing game that uses a plurality of self-propelled members that move using a specific yoke movement system to move around a traveling field. The claims have simply used an alternative art known equivalents and language structures to detail the same invention. Therefore it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that these inventions are not patentably distinct but used a modification in words to state the same invention. However, the claims of the current application additionally, claim the use of a controller for the miniature members. However, it is an inherent feature that gaming machines incorporate the use a controller to operate its features to perform the functions with which to operate the machine. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate such a limitation into the claims to further clarify the operation of the invention.

Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application

Art Unit: 3714

which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968).

See also MPEP § 804.

Allowable Subject Matter

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art of Nakagawa and Sutoki, teaches a gaming machine comprising: a traveling field, on which platen dots are provided; a plurality of miniature members; and a plurality of self-propelled members, which are provided on the traveling field. Nakagawa and Sutoki also teach each of the self-propelled members including a base body; a first yoke and a second yoke and a motor to control the movement around the track for each of the plurality of members. However, the prior art of record is silent with regard to the relationship involved between a shaft coupled with a motor and the controller operation to create a rotational movement between the self-propelled member and the miniature member. As indicated by the applicant, Nakagawa's controller does not incorporate the use of a shaft which controls the motor such that a rotated angle of the shaft so that a relative angle between the front face of the base body of the self-propelled member and a front face of the associated one of the miniature members is varied in accordance with the propelling direction of the base body or self-propelled member. Instead Nakagawa's controller only incorporates the miniature members to follow the movement of the fixed magnets of Nakagawa therefore rotational movement of the miniature member is not possible while the self-propelled member is in a stationary position.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ryan Hsu whose telephone number is (571)272-7148. The examiner can normally be reached on 9 :00-17:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert P. Olszewski can be reached on (571)272-6788. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3714

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



RH

11/11/06



SCOTT JONES
PRIMARY EXAMINER